

Cohasset Churches



St. Stephen's

St. Stephen's Parish (Episcopal), South Main Street 383-0219. The Rev. Richard Muir. Sunday services at 8 and 10 a.m. Nursery care provided for 10 a.m. service.

St. Anthony's

St. Anthony's Church, Summer and South Main Streets. 383-0219. The Rev. John J. Keohane, pastor; the Rev. Charles R. McKenny, SJ, associate. Saturday mass at 5 p.m. Sunday masses at 7, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Daily mass at 7 a.m., Saturday at 8 a.m. Sacrament of penance Saturday from 4 to 5 p.m.

Congregational

Second Congregational Church in Cohasset (United Church of Christ), 43 Highland Ave. 383-0345. The Rev. John Benbow. Sunday services at 10 a.m. Church School at 10 a.m. Nursery and child care provided.

First Parish

First Parish Church in Cohasset (Unitarian-Universalist), 23 North Main St. 383-1100. The Rev. Edward Atkinson. Sunday services at 10:30 a.m. in the meeting house on the Common. Church School at 10:15 a.m. in the parish house across the street.

Community

South Shore Christian Community (Non Denominational), 7 Depot Court. 383-6683. Communion services 6:15 a.m. Mon.-Fri., 8:00 a.m. Sat. and Sun. Counselling available by appointment. Public classes Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.

United

Beechwood Congregational United Church of Christ, Church Street, 383-0808. Rev. Robert Campbell. Sunday services 10:45 a.m. Nursery care provided. Church school 9:30 a.m.



A GREAT YEAR
TO GET INTO THE
CLASSIFIEDS



Meet Eleanor & Frances Downs Two Cohasset Treasures

Yesterday—Eleanor & Frances Downs

By Joanne Young

The year 1979 ushers in the 102nd birthday of Cohasset's oldest citizen, Miss Eleanor Downs. Her sister, Frances, was 95 Christmas Day.

Frances, or Fannie, as she is affectionately called, attributes their long lives to a healthy diet, most of the food grown in her own garden; not having the stresses that come from raising children; and the stability of loving and supportive parents.

We asked Fannie if she would have changed any part of her life, and she answered an emphatic "NO." "I never wanted to live anywhere but the beautiful town of Cohasset, and I had generous parents who allowed my sisters and me freedom of choice to do what we wanted with our lives." (We have noted in interviewing successful people who have lived long that this freedom is a constant in their lives. But it always presupposes trust, on the part of their parents, that traditional mores and values are also assumed.)

There were four Downs sisters: Jane, Rebecca, Eleanor and Frances. Their mother was Ellen O'Keefe, who was nurse to the Gammons children when she met and married Patrick Downs, who emigrated to Cohasset from Ireland in 1863 and was a stonemason. Many of the walls he built are still standing along South Main Street and around the Cox Estate on the Harbor. The Downs family were great horsemen in Ireland and the sisters' grandfather was killed while jumping during a hunt. Frances remembers her father had silver stirrups on his saddle.

Rebecca married Joseph Hock, an actor, and toured the country in a private car with her husband and James O'Neill, Eugene O'Neill's father, in the play THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO. Jane married Harry Lincoln and the Lincoln house is still standing next to the library. They built the first tennis court in Cohasset.

Eleanor and Frances never married, and remained in their parents' home on James Lane, which was built from ship's timbers washed up on the Cohasset shoreline. When Eleanor started school in 1882, there were no public schools.

She and Rebecca attended the little red school-house which stood where St. Stephen's Church is now, then they went to the Academy, which was built on the present Town Hall property. It was rebuilt on Beach Street and is the present Tower house. The first school to contain first grade through high school was an imposing three story structure on the site of the present police station. Kindergarten was held in the current Rotary building on Elm St. When it became outmoded, the Ripley Road school was built and the Unitarian Church minister, Joseph Osgood, a graduate of Harvard, was its first teacher. Eleanor was instrumental in having the school renamed in

to Boston by train every day except in the winter, when they rented an apartment in Boston and returned home for the weekends. During this time they were active socially in Boston and Frances rode horses sidesaddle and played tennis at the Country Club in Brookline.

Eleanor was tax collector for Cohasset for 17 years, after her retirement from secretarial work. It was part of her job to collect the poll tax and she would ask for one dollar per head from each family and try to collect ten dollars for each house. It was during the Depression when Roosevelt closed the banks and Eleanor tried to save homes from being sold at public auction.

season. When John MacCormack visited the Bancrofts they were invited to meet him. Their New Year's Day Egg Nog party was eagerly looked forward to by many Cohasset friends and neighbors.

Eleanor and Frances' popularity throughout their lives is due to their ability to adapt to each decade and the great changes it brought. They were always surrounded by young people, and may be considered the original sparkling example of what today is known as "women's liberation." They always considered themselves liberated and moved through life sharing and contributing. We are pleased that they have shared their memories of a fulfilled life with us.



Today—Frances (L) & Eleanor Downs

honor of Joseph Osgood, in recognition of his contribution to education in Cohasset.

Frances graduated from Cohasset High School in 1899 and studied under Miss Chandler in the one-room Chandler Secretarial School in Boston. Frances became, at 17, secretary to a History professor at Harvard. Eleanor held an important position during World War I as head of government disbursement, for the Emery Wool Co., of all wool sold in the country. Wool was a scarce commodity then as most available wool was made into uniforms for the troops. Both sisters commuted

Frances retired at forty-five and spent her time at their James Lane home cultivating a magnificent flower and vegetable garden. The Downs had the first Ford car in Cohasset. It was a brougham and featured the self-starter. The original Fords were copies of carriages. Before the advent of the motor car, the Downs were very proud of their horse and carriage, which was lined with purple broadcloth.

Eleanor and Frances are remembered by townspeople as two distinguished Victorian ladies with a great flair for living. They loved opera and were patrons during opera

Frances Downs voiced the sad fact that she feels she has outlived her usefulness in this life. We discussed the tragic waste of lives still alert and functional, lived out in nursing homes instead of around the family hearth.

In another century, there was room for all ages, and older members of the family were part of a useful unit, still baking, sewing, knitting, caring for the young and carrying on the tradition of the family with remembered stories of past generations. These are loving memories of the roots and traditions of two indomitable women - Eleanor and Frances Downs.